

Transcript of Interview #9 (28/03/25)

Interviewer: Hi, my name is Jodie. I'm a masters student at the University of Sydney School of Architecture, Design and Planning. I'm the responsible research for this study and will be conducting this interview. Thank you for agreeing to participate.

Please note that you can withdraw from this interview at any time, even after it's finished. If you withdraw your responses were being reared from the study. or this interview, I'm going to be asking you some questions about what you think of the boundaries of Western Sydney when shown on a map and what makes it different for the rest of Sydney. There are no right or wrong answers.

Before I ask you the questions, I've provided you with a map called Map 1. This map is for you to look at and can give out the key question - where is Western Sydney? You can draw lines, arrows, images, comments or anything you would like to mark on Map 1 where you think Western Sydney starts and end in this map. Draw on this map at any time or the end of the interview and I will let you know when we're reaching that end. Make as many changes as you like.

Okay, I'm going to start asking you the interview questions now. In whatever way you like, tell me a little bit about yourself and where in Sydney you live.

Interviewee: Hi, so uh about myself, okay, so um I'm a public servant. I have a, relatively recent uh Sydney resident, so I moved four and a half years ago. I previously came from Canberra and moved to Sydney, although I've previously, uh my parents were born and grew up in Sydney, and I visited many times growing up. And yes, and I'm currently a resident of Newtown in the Inner West.

Interviewer: What are the first four words that come to mind when you read or hear Western Sydney?

Interviewee: Words, or ideas?

Interviewer: Doesn't matter.

Interviewee: So I guess, culturally diverse, hot, uh, I guess, suburban. I don't know, maybe a bit boring.

Interviewer: Extrapolate on this.

Interviewee: Extrapolate on which of them, all of them?

Interviewer: All of them, yeah.

Interviewee: So I guess, culturally diverse because, I guess, I came from a relatively culturally homogeneous place in Canberra and it's noticeable coming to and in the part of Sydney that I live, not as much, but certainly when I visit other parts of Western

Sydney, it's noticeable that it's much more diverse than where I grew up with most other places that I know

Interviewer: Would you say more culturally diverse than where you live in Newtown in the Inner West?

Interviewee: I think, yeah, yes, yes, and probably particularly like in particular suburbs that you have concentrations on particular ethnicities that you wouldn't see that, in somewhere, like in the Inner West or certainly in the east.

Interviewer: Okay, tell me a little bit about 'boring', in what way?

Interviewee: I think that certainly goes to my own prejudices about suburban life. I think also from having visited, growing up in the, in the north-west, where my family is from and where my relatives still live. I think just as a child there was not really very much to do for a for a visitor, might be different for a resident, but and I think there's still is a certain amount of, that I associate Western Sydney with a certain form of bland suburbia of, not a lot happening.

Interviewer: I guess the next question is quite related because it's what are your perceptions or associations of Western Sydney today?

Interviewee: Um I think that's broadly the same. I've lived, in brief points, in Western Sydney.

Interviewer: Whereabouts?

Interviewee: I lived in Toongabbie near Westmead. So I guess that would be the, I guess, that's the western, well, not the western suburbs, but in the that section of the west. And with uh visiting various family in the south-west and in Penrith, things like that um but yes, sorry, what was the initiating question again, sorry?

Interviewer: Your perceptions or associations of Western Sydney today.

Interviewee: I think that it somewhere that I, other than for the purpose of visiting relatives or for playing sport, it's something that I don't visit very much, so it's not gonna be something that I think about very much unless I have sort of some particular reason to go and visit and, you know, there's not much out there for me.

Interviewer: What is, like, when you mean out there for you? What does that mean?

Interviewee: As in there's no particular reason for me to visit.

Interviewer: Okay, like what things would make you visit?

Interviewee: As in they currently do or what would make visit in a practical sense?

Interviewer: Hm, like in a hypothetical, like, if things came to places that you called Western Sydney, what would they be?

Interviewee: I guess what of the things they making travel elsewhere. I guess, to leave the specific bubble of the Inner West or the CBD where I work that, I guess, I guess, like, travel for cultural events, to visit things like museums and things like that, to have food and things like that if I'm going out to a restaurant, probably also would be where my friends and acquaintances were living.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: I think that, yeah, I think that would be the biggest drawer if I had some reason to hang out there, I guess, you know, in a sense, culturally detached from that as well.

Interviewer: How has your view of Western Sydney changed over time?

Interviewee: Uh, I think possibly softened as I think moving to Sydney that um I had a, gave a certain understanding that not all of the the west was Castle Hill and I guess that would be a question of what people consider the north-west, the west, but any anyway, that's probably a question that was asked.

Um but, the, uh, the, I think, I think, that understanding that there is more to Western Sydney than, um just sort of leafy suburbs of the north-west, that's sort of a lot of the south-west, or places like Fairfield, were just places that we sort of drove through on the way to get to other places. And I think since moving to Sydney, I've sort of got a better appreciation of like the sort of cultural identity in the food and sort of some of the more interesting and unusual parts of particularly, I think, the west and the south-west. So I think that has changed in my knowledge, and I think also working for the government and having to sort of consider the factors in the challenges that are affect some of the communities, there sort of given me a bit more of a empathy, I think.

Interviewer: What did you think initially and where did this come from?

Interviewee: Of my opinion of Western Sydney?

Interviewer: Yup.

Interviewee: I think it would be my lived experience, with, I think it was not much not much to do, to see it was, I don't like hot weather, and it was always hot, particularly in summer and yeah, it just didn't seem particularly appealing and there was no - nothing that particularly drew me to it. I think possibly in the same way living there I never been to Ipswich.

Interviewer: What do you think makes Western Sydney a distinct part of Sydney?

Interviewee: Um, so I think, I think, the geographic to some extent, that it's, that it's a particular set of, um, I guess,, a particular set of like settlement patterns like the suburban layout, the connection by highways, that sort of stuff. Um, I think,

definitionally, I think Western Sydney is associated with a set of cultural and sort of ethnic patterns of like migrant settlement and so on, communities associated with that.

Interviewer: When you say, before in your previous answer, you said cultural identity of Western Sydney, what did you mean by that?

Interviewee: Uh, I think, I think, there is a particularly that the Inner West, I think has a certain like, lefty socialists, wealthy bubble to it. I think there's a, there's a different set of experiences and cultural values that would be sort of, that very much different from someone growing up in in Canberra.

And I think, that the sort of, the sort of values of that I gain from, you know, growing up in a public service town, growing up with, you know, like public service parents growing up from the seventies. There's a, like, really long, you know, multigenerational Australian families, so um, you know, I feel like there's a different set of, um, trying to – always difficult to put into words isn't it? Um, that of, a like, a both a more, like, Sydney is much more of a town built around like more of a public, commerce business mindset, I think. Um, that, I think if I also went somewhere like onto the North Shore, for example, and I think, briefly living in North Sydney as well, but that was a different vibe to what I was used to, and I think to some extent the sort of the, and I think the sort of people that I hang around with, and the cultural sense and the particular things that people are looking for in the Inner West, sort of more aligns with my outlook on the world, perhaps.

Interviewer: So what set of cultural values do you associate with Western Sydney?

Interviewee: Um, I think, like, well, so partially I think it's to do with families and settlement patterns in that sense. That it is a place that I associate with people moving to like raise families. And I think probably having my knowledge of demographic research, probably like co-shaped the answer.

I think it's sort of what I was looking for when I moved to Sydney was something that was more like more activity at night, more vibrant, more like food options, more just like a denser, more concentrative sort of sense. When I moved to Sydney, I didn't particularly, other than briefly new living in Toongabbie, wasn't the sort of suburban experience that I particularly wanted.

So I guess that in the sense of cultural values of Western Sydney, um I I don't know whether it's sort of trying to project onto it because I like couldn't like go through and interview people and establish their thinking, but it's a certainly a place of like um somewhere to like grow your family, somewhere that's very focused on like upwards mobility, improvements, like, a sense of like, ethnic divers - ethnic identity, and things like that or something. I'm sure I, feels like I'm waffling in circles.

Interviewer: No, no, that's good. Before we move on to our mapping question, did you have any other comments to make?

Interviewee: Um about uh the values of Western Sydney?

Interviewer: Of anything

Interviewee: Of anything to do with this. Um, I sort of, it is something that I've I thought about what, is the um, what is, is there an is there a difference between Sydney and Western Sydney as sort of separate cultural entities? And I, like, as someone who likes to think of like a sense of solidarity in the world um I don't know.

I think it's a, and I think from the experience of when my parents grew up in, you know, semi-rural area, like my dad's family's go kart track in West Pennant Hills to sort of what it is now. I think, that there's sort of been a distinct, and sort of how the economic trend has created this sort of entity, as whether - and whether it will grow as just sort of the outgrowth suburbs of the CBD versus something that also will create its own identity in the future, will be interesting to see with its own sort of, cause you always see a city that is built around commerce and employment and it's like, "will there be that divide of Western Sydney to its own sort of separate commercial entity?" Who knows, anyway.

Interviewer: That's good. We'll start on the mapping questions. So if you look before you to Map 1, how would you show where Western Sydney starts and ends on this map? Talk me through your process.

Interviewee: Okay, I guess, I'll probably start by thinking regionally and I can start by thinking about things that I would not think of as Western Sydney. So, I think culturally I would not say that, Sutherland is definitely not part of Western Sydney, it's a place that's built culturally around the beach, and that particular set of people moving into that area based around wanting to be in the east. I would rule out the eastern suburbs, if nothing else, it has east in the name.

Interviewer: How far east do you go when it becomes 'not east'?

Interviewee: Well, I've got more circles I can draw.

Interviewer: Go right ahead.

Interviewee: I would say that the Northern Beaches is not Western Sydney. Similarly, I would say that the, uh I would say that the North Shore, that I will say certainly so Mosman, I would say up to uh, certainly to Chatsworth, I would not put as east Sydney, um well, I would put as east, well, as not Western Sydney. Possibly because, I think in that sense that might be back to, whereas, growing up where my family would think about those as places that you went in order to be in the east.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: And possibly also from, if nothing else, when I get to somewhere like, I think, Epping and Eastwood, I would also keep out, if nothing else, but because growing

up they were part of the Sydney Rugby competition and I was like, that's my main knowledge of at this point/

Interviewer: Okay, very good.

Interviewee: Uh and places like I think down at least to the river here.

Interviewer: Which river is this?

Interviewee: We're down to the upper Parramatta, I would say, the upper Parramatta River. We're roughly going along um, what road is that? Uh 'cause Rhodes is down here, isn't it? That's, is that? No Granville's down here. What is that road? Is that James Ruse Drive?

Interviewer: Yeah, I think it's James Ruse Drive.

Interviewee: Okay, yeah. All right, so I'll say that. I don't know, I will say the sections of of um, along so that would be along the edge down through places like that would be things like Rhodes, wouldn't it?

And um and then all right, I think that's where it start getting a bit blurry for me. So I'm going I'm going to re - I'm going to begin again and I'm gonna start down here at, down here at, uh that's La Perouse going down there?

Interviewer: Yup.

Interviewee: So up so through the airport, and I think we've got certainly got the sections of the Inner West that, um, and, let's say uh certainly through Marrickville perhaps down to there, maybe, I think may down to there, so sort of, so that's sort of, down past, ending at Hurstville. So sort of the areas out towards Canterbury, outside of, sort of start saying, are they, are they, I'd say, they're still sort of the Inner West part of the world, that I think in an earlier time might have been called Western Sydney.

Interviewer: Once upon a time, Marrickville was called Western Sydney.

Interviewee: Western Sydney, yup.

And certainly, I think, when from when my mother lived in Glebe, that would still be sort of Sydney-adjacent, but, I think, you would start at that point, starting to consider some of those places into the west.

But I think in, this, that sort of, still, I guess, in my mind is that, is that not the west because it's sort of has a kind of affluent and culture that's not any more associated with, like, the 19 - because 1960s like expansion 'go west' included places that would say, like, out towards Bankstown and places like that. I don't know, my grandfather actually worked on a lot of construction ub this sort of this sort of area during that suburban expansion of 1960s but I don't know, I feel like, I feel like, I want to, cause we

it's sort, of that's sort of, in this Burwood-Ashfield, as a sense of, what is the modern, the modern versus the historical west? Can I put like a blurry line?

Interviewer: Yeah, or a dotted line.

Interviewee: Yeah, let's put a dotted line,

Interviewer: So what is this, what is this east of the dotted line?

Interviewee: I think, I don't know, is this almost like the gentrification of what, like –

Interviewer: Okay, the gentrification line is Burwood, where else?

Interviewer: And I think some parts of Canterbury-Bankstown as well.

Interviewee: Whereabouts in Canterbury-Bankstown are we stopping?

Interviewee: I think, like that'll be like Campsie, it's like Bexley, and places like that, isn't it? So I think that's, that, that the, maybe that is like, a like, like the iron curtain of gentrification slowly shifting across the –

Interviewer: So do you see Western Sydney as a state of gentrification?

Interviewee: Uh, I think, the, what people think of as the west, to some extent, has to do with and, I guess it's what I think it is, um that there's that it's sort of the shift of the change, from like, and with development patterns as well, the change from like suburban family things into more of like the yuppie, all the displaced by yuppie shift from what would have been, and I guess, that would have been from places like in the east and the North Shore slowly shifting this kind of direction.

Interviewer: Yup. So, but you saying that everything west of these bubbles, and the dotted line that you drawn, is Western Sydney or you've still got more?

Interviewee: Um, there are some things, so I've, never quite sure about, because places that I would definitely say would be Western Sydney. All right, let's put a, let's put a big - so in the, so I think of Penrith, up to the Blue Mountains, sort of as tick, definitely Western Sydney.

Interviewer: So what point before you were going up the mountains, are you stopping?

Interviewee: I think the sign that says, 'Welcome to Sydney' and that's at the bottom of the on the M4 –

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Or not the M4 anymore, the Great Western Highway, once you start heading up into the mountains itself, I don't.

Interviewer: Okay, so yes, Penrith and its surrounds.

Interviewee: I would say that Mount Druitt, St Mary's, that corridor from Parramatta, definitely, yes. I would say, uh, the sections, so from Parramatta uh, so from, west from Parramatta, so along that corridor, I would definitely say tick. I think that the general Fairfield area, I'd say down to down to Liverpool, around hm, because I I feel like if we then go like a definite here sort of past Bankstown, Revesby but I -

Interviewer: Are you following the Georges River?

Interviewee: I think I'm following the M5 here.

Interviewer: Oh, yeah. So what about those communities by the Georges River there?

Interviewee: But yeah, these, I feel like there might be another dotted gentrification line, like shifting up from the Shire onto the other side of the Georges River.

Interviewer: Oh okay, can you add this dotted line?

Interviewee: I'll add this, this can be a dotted line area.

Interviewer: A demilitarisation zone.

Interviewee: A demilitarisation zone, but like the outer Inner West.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: I think, I've, for me, the North-west is the west.

Interviewer: What point does it stop being so?

Interviewee: I would say, so I think, I think of Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai as being not.

Interviewer: Yep.

Interviewee: I think, would that be that still the upper North - no, because the upper North Shore is sort of there and that would be Hornsby and things like that. And then I would put, places like um so Dural through to the um to the new, maybe I need a different sort of dotted line here

Interviewer: Okay, so what does this dotted line mean?

Interviewee: Because I don't think it places like Richmond and Windsor, that were semi-rural areas, as necessarily part of, like, Western Sydney. I sort of think of them, as sort of like, the Hawkesbury, sort of that way?

Interviewer: As distinct entities?

Interviewee: Yeah, but as a different sort of hashed line as sort of the Western expanse or the north-western expansion of the part.

Interviewer: So would you include it as Western Sydney or no?

Interviewee: I'd say that as these become suburban, I would say they would become part of Western Sydney.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: And then in this, possibly in the south-west as well, that for a long time I wouldn't have thought of, um, I think Western Sydney Airport as well. It's good, that's good. Where is? You would know, where the Leppington Triangle is and places are – oh Leppington Triangle is sort of there.

Interviewer: It's kind of like there.

Interviewee: Yeah, so would have thought of um that as another one, and I don't what I think about, what do I think about Campbelltown? Um, the, so, I definitely class, now that the airport has been built as such, I would definitely consider the Western Sydney Aerotropolis, using the planning jargon,

Interviewer: Ah, yes.

Interviewee: Would be in Western Sydney. And then, I think, as another that as sort of because I thought of, because growing up, I wouldn't have thought, because Campbelltown growing up, I thought is like something distinct from Sydney.

Interviewer: Okay. Why?

Interviewee: I think because it was smaller and there wasn't all this stuff in the middle. because driving up the Hume Highway, and then onto the Cumberland Highway to the north, it was Campbelltown blank Sydney.

Interviewer: What now?

Interviewee: Campbelltown, suburbs, more suburbs.

So maybe I need to have another, like, all right, um see, hm, I guess, yeah, I think that there is a, there is a, there is a, maybe a question mark here, but an expanding question mark um that could, and I think in terms of like the settlement and cultural patterns that I associate with Western Sydney, would increasingly be seen that to towards Leppington and Camden as well.

Interviewer: Are they in your question mark category or your dotted line -

Interviewee: They're in my question mark category.

Interviewer: As in you don't know, or to be determined?

Interviewee: Let's put a, yeah, I think, I think, that would the same question mark as up here for the expanding into the west.

Interviewer: Into the Hawkesbury?

Interviewee: Into the Hawkesbury, yeah.

Interviewer: So to you, what does this question mark mean?

Interviewee: Uh, I think to me, these, this question mark means uh. No, I think question mark is wrong. Let's say that they are, that I think that they will become like the rest of Western Sydney based on the current patterns that are growing there in terms –

Interviewer: In terms of population, housing?

Interviewee: In terms of settlement, migration.

Interviewer: Okay, so soon to be soon to be Western Sydney.

Interviewee: Soon to be Western Sydney.

Interviewer: I mean, is that, is that what they mean to you?

Interviewee: Yeah, I think that that's what it means to me.

Interviewer: Okay, so your current state is everything with the tick and the question marks are soon to be but not at the moment.

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: And everything else, so the Xs are definitely not. And what about the expenses that have nothing?

Interviewee: And then I'd say that, that Hawkesbury is not in my mind, with the exception of this expansion of the north-west. Um and I think these, these sort of rural areas of the Sydney Basin are not.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you wanted to ask before we move onto Map 2?

Interviewee: No, I think that, that covers the my, my views on this map.

Interviewer: Uh, so please go to the second page underneath Map 1. Map 2, this is the same as Map 1 but it's just a satellite view of land and urban settlement patterns. After seeing Map 2, does this affect anything about how you've shown Western Sydney in Map 1?

Interviewee: Uh, no. Okay. I think it probably doesn't help that I look at maps all day for my job. So good.

Interviewer: Uh, this is the end of the interview. Do you have any other comments or what officially closed out?

Interviewee: No. Okay.

Interviewer: Thank you for participating and for your inputs. You can contact me at any time if you have any questions or concerns about the study or your interview response.

My contact details are in the participant information statement that I gave report's interview. once again, thank you for your time and for your inputs. They're greatly appreciated.